




## DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH POLICY/PROCEDURE

SUBJECT <b>BILINGUAL BONUS</b>	POLICY NO. <b>602.1</b>	EFFECTIVE DATE <b>11/01/01</b>	PAGE <b>1 of 4</b>
APPROVED BY:  Director	SUPERSEDES <b>10/01/89</b>	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE <b>04/02/79</b>	DISTRIBUTION LEVEL(S) <b>1</b>

### **PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To establish the Department of Mental Health (DMH) policy and guidelines in the administration of bilingual bonus payments under provisions of the Los Angeles County Code, Section 6.10.140.

### **DEFINITION**

- 2.1 Bilingual bonus is compensation paid to certified bilingually proficient employees whose assignments require fluency in both English and at least one foreign language as well as knowledge of and sensitivity toward the culture and needs of the foreign-language group clientele which DMH serves. Such a bonus does not constitute "base rate" pay. American Sign Language (ASL) is considered a foreign language for purposes of this bonus.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

- 3.1 To qualify for the bilingual bonus, employees must meet all of the following conditions:
- 3.1.1 Hold permanent and full-time status or hold a temporary or recurrent position.
  - 3.1.2 Be assigned to duties that require the use of the foreign language(s) on a continuing and frequent basis to meet the public service responsibility of DMH. Examples of situations that meet the definition of "continuing and frequent" include, but are not limited to:
    - 3.1.2.1 An employee who is assigned a caseload that requires the use of a second language.
    - 3.1.2.2 An employee whose assignment requires regular, ongoing contact with the public where the use of a second language is necessary and where the employee possesses and displays a knowledge of and sensitivity toward the culture and needs of the foreign language group.
    - 3.1.2.3 An employee who is not an interpreter but who is required to translate materials on a regular and ongoing basis from English to another language or from another language to English.



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3.1.2.4 Administrative and managerial positions do not routinely meet this condition since they are not considered public contact positions. However, in some situations, with the Deputy Director's written approval, an administrative or managerial position may be designated as one involving significant public contact in which bilingual skills are needed and would further DMH's public service responsibility.

3.1.3 Possess a valid Language Proficiency Certificate issued as a result of the County's Bilingual Proficiency Examination procedure, which tests for proficiency to either speak, read and/or write the language.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the District Chief or higher level to determine the skill required for the assignment and to ensure the employee is properly certified for the needed skill.

### **PROCEDURE**

4.1 DMH may administer examinations and establish eligible registers (or certification lists) for some positions with foreign language skills as a requirement. Candidates will be tested for bilingual proficiency as part of the examination process and, if successful, issued a Language Proficiency Certificate. Successful candidate names will then be placed on the eligible registers. DMH may select candidates from the eligible registers when the foreign language skills are needed for a position. Candidates who are appointed from such registers are employed on the condition that they use their bilingual skills while holding the position. The bilingual bonus is authorized or terminated with the "Bilingual Bonus Authorization/Termination" form (MH329) (Attachment I).

### **Authorization of Bonus**

4.2 When a District Chief wishes to appoint an eligible employee with a foreign language specialty, the original MH 329 along with a copy of the employee's Language Proficiency Certificate shall be attached to the Personnel Action Form (PAF) for processing.

4.2.1 If the candidate or employee already has a valid Language Proficiency Certificate (or retains eligibility after being terminated from the bonus), the District Chief shall enter specific justification information, such as frequency of use, on the MH 329. A copy of the MH 329 shall be retained by the District Chief. Upon completion of the appropriate sections of the MH 329, the Processing Staff Liaison shall return two copies to the District Chief. One copy is given to the employee and the other filed in the employee's office folder.

4.2.2 If the candidate or employee does not have a valid Language Proficiency Certificate, the District Chief shall complete the MH 329, checking the box "I request that a Language



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Proficiency Examination be administered" and send it to the Bilingual Coordinator who shall arrange for a proficiency test and notify the District Chief of the results.

If the candidate or employee passes the proficiency test, the Bilingual Coordinator shall attach a copy of the Language Proficiency Certification to the MH 329 and return it to the District Chief for processing (see Section 4.2).

- 4.3 The District Chief determines and justifies whether a given assignment requires a bilingual employee and approves or terminates the bilingual bonus as appropriate. The District Chief has responsibility for authorizing a bilingual bonus. Supervisory levels are not to be delegated final authority to approve a bilingual bonus.
- 4.4 The Processing Staff Liaison shall review the MH 329 and complete the Personnel Division portion of all copies. If no effective date is indicated on the MH 329, the Processing Staff Liaison shall contact the appropriate District Chief. The Processing Staff shall enter the information into CWTAPPS. The MH 329, along with a copy of the Language Proficiency Certificate, shall be filed in the employee's Official Personnel File. Two copies shall be returned to the District Chief. The Processing Staff Liaison shall notify the District Chief if the MH 329 is not approved as submitted.

### Termination/Continuation of Bonus

- 4.5 Authorization to receive the bilingual bonus terminates whenever the employee is rated less than competent in an official Performance Evaluation, transfers between County Departments, changes pay location, promotes, demotes, changes classification, begins an unpaid leave or has been on a continuous leave of absence for 60 or more calendar days, changes assignment or is no longer required to use the foreign language on the job.
- 4.6 If the bilingual bonus is to be continued following transfer to a new pay location or a new classification, the District Chief who supervises that pay location must request such continuance on the PAF and attach a properly completed MH 329.
  - 4.6.1 Payment of the bilingual bonus may only be authorized as long as the facts upon which it is based continue to exist and the employee continues to remain eligible.
  - 4.6.2 The District Chief must terminate the bonus as soon as possible but no later than five (5) business days after eligibility ceases. The District Chief shall complete the "Termination" portion of the MH 329 in triplicate and send the original to the Bilingual Coordinator in HRB, keep the first copy for office records and send the second copy to the employee (if available).



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- 4.6.3 The Processing Staff shall terminate the bonus and file the original MH 329 in the employee's Official Personnel File.

### Review of Bonus

- 4.6 At least every six months, HRB shall survey all work locations with employees receiving a bilingual bonus. The District Chief for that work location shall confirm in writing that the employee(s) receiving a bilingual bonus meet the criteria as set forth in the ELIGIBILITY section of this policy.
- 4.8 On a monthly basis Payroll staff shall review and identify those employees receiving a bilingual bonus who have been absent 60 or more calendar days. Payroll shall then notify the Processing Staff to stop payment of the bonus.
- 4.8.1 Once Payroll is notified that an employee has returned to work, Payroll shall notify the Processing Staff to reinstate the bonus.
- 5.1 The effective date of the bonus shall be the date designated on the MH 329 by the District Chief, provided the employee meets the eligibility criteria.
- 6.1 Full-time employees certified to receive the bilingual bonus established in County Code Section 6.10.140 shall receive additional compensation at the rate specified by the Board of Supervisors. Employees paid on an hourly basis shall receive additional compensation at the hourly rate specified by the Board of Supervisors.
- 6.2 In no event shall such compensation be effective before the employee is certified or before the first day of his/her assignment to the qualifying position.

### AUTHORITY

Los Angeles County Code, Section 6.10.140  
Memoranda of Understanding between the County and Certified Bargaining Units

### ATTACHMENT

Attachment I Bilingual Bonus Authorization/Termination – Form MH 329

### REVIEW DATE

This policy shall be reviewed on or before November 1, 2006

## COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

## BILINGUAL BONUS AUTHORIZATION/TERMINATION

## PLEASE TYPE

EMPLOYEE NAME:	EMPLOYEE NO.:
PAYROLL TITLE:	ITEM NO.:
OFFICE/POGRAM:	PAY LOCATION:

☐ **AUTHORIZATION**

Language required: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills required: ☐ Speaking ☐ Writing ☐ Reading

Date Certificate issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties requiring use of bilingual skills (be specific):

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Average Number of Times Language Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Per Day \_\_\_\_\_ Per Week

Date Assignment Begins \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the employee meets the eligibility criteria established by departmental policy.

☐ I request that a Language Proficiency Examination be administered for the language and skills identified above.☐ I request bilingual bonus for the employee. \_\_\_\_\_  
District Chief Signature Date☐ **TERMINATION**

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I authorize termination of bilingual bonus\_\_\_\_\_  
District Chief Signature Date**PERSONNEL DIVISION USE ONLY**

1. Effective Date of Bonus/Termination \_\_\_\_\_ Date Payroll notified \_\_\_\_\_

2. Reason for denial of request \_\_\_\_\_

Date District Chief notified \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bilingual Coordinator Signature Date

SEND ORIGINAL AND 3 COPIES TO BILINGUAL COORDINATOR  
RETAIN COPY IN OFFICE FILE